Literacy

9

At one time, literacy was defined simply as the ability to read. Today, as information and technology drive American society, that definition has been broadened. The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 defines literacy as "the ability to read, write and speak English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society." Very few adults who have attended school in the United States cannot read at all. However, between 21 and 23 percent of the U.S. population function at literacy Level 1, and another 25 to 28 percent function at Level 2, as defined by the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL).

Literacy experts believe that adults with only Level 1 or Level 2 skills lack the foundation to function fully in society. Adults who cannot read at Level 1 cannot total an entry on a deposit ticket, locate the time and place of a meeting on a flyer, or identify information in a brief news article. The illiteracy rates continue to rise in part not because more people are unable to read but because the level of skills needed to survive in society continues to rise. Adults at Level 2 cannot calculate the cost of a purchase, locate an intersection on a map, or complete a simple form. About 60 percent of adults reading at Level 1 or Level 2 never completed high school.

More Than 50 Percent of Patients Cannot Follow Medical Instructions

54.3 percent of people receiving Medicare in 1997 who had low literacy skills could not understand written instructions on how to take medication on an empty stomach.

67.7 percent of people in 1997 with low literacy skills did not know how to interpret low blood sugar levels.

Source: National Institute for Literacy (www.nifl.gov).

People in Wisconsin Who Have Literacy Needs

The NIFL's 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey estimated that 14 percent of Wisconsin adults read at the very lowest levels. However, data from the U.S. Census Bureau for 2000 indicates that the illiteracy rate may be slightly higher than that estimate. One criterion used frequently to define illiteracy is level of education. As indicated in table 12.4, census figures show that 15 percent of the adult population in Wisconsin over the age 25 (518,417 people) did not complete high school and do not have an equivalency degree. Of those, 186,125 have less than nine years of formal education. Literacy Services of Wisconsin, Inc., a Milwaukee-based literacy agency, estimates that there are more than 300,000 adults with literacy needs in Wisconsin, 160,000 of them in the Milwaukee area.

Education Levels in Wisconsin, 2000

Less than ninth grade	8%	Some college, no degree	20%
Between ninth and twelfth grade	13%	Associate degree	7%
High school diploma or equivalent	36%	Bachelor's degree	11%
		Attended graduate school	5%

Source: The Wisconsin Literacy Resource Network (www.board.tec.wi.us/wlrn).

One group reflected in the illiteracy statistics are senior citizens who grew up during the Depression and World War II. During that time, high schools were not readily available to students living in rural areas. Many who did begin high school classes dropped out to support their families or to join the war efforts. According to the 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey (National Institute for Literacy), 30 percent of people over the age of 65 read at Level 1 or 2.

Students dropping out of school continues to be a challenge today, but perhaps for different reasons. The DPI reports that 6,441 Wisconsin students dropped out of high school at some point in the 1999–2000 school year and did not return the following fall (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 2001). The same report indicates that 475 students left school in the seventh and eighth grades and did not return. Students who drop out of school because of a lack of academic support and success, family problems, or involvement with drugs, alcohol, or violence add to the number of adults with low literacy skills in the state. Poverty is also a significant factor in the cycle of illiteracy and is related to the drop-out situation. The connection between poverty and illiteracy is covered in more depth in chapter 10.

The DPI drop-out report states that the rates for all racial and ethnic groups are higher than the rate for European American students. In Milwaukee only about half the students who start ninth grade will finish high school four years later. Less than half the district's Native American and African American students graduate from high school, and the graduation rate for European American students in Milwaukee is the lowest in the state.

Even though better testing and instructional techniques are available, children with learning disabilities may still go undetected. Their lack of academic success can lead to discouragement, lack of self-esteem, and behavioral problems. They may just give up and leave school, adding to the number of adults who have low literacy skills.

In addition, some students are "passed through" from one year to the next and graduate even though they do not have the minimum skills of their peers. Some may slip through because they have excellent adaptive skills and great social skills and can hide their literacy weaknesses. These students may be highly intelligent but have significant learning disabilities. Although they have a high school diploma, they may lack the literacy skills needed to cope in society and add to the number of functionally illiterate adults in Wisconsin.

Estimates on Learning Disabilities in the United States

Estimates of learning disabilities in the population in general range from 3 to 13 percent. Among adults with low literacy levels, the estimates are much higher, between 50 and 80 percent (National Institute for Literacy 2002).

Another factor that adds to the overall number of adults with low literacy skills in the state is the growing number of immigrants arriving who have low literacy skills. The U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000 data indicates that people born in Asia represent 32.4 percent of the Wisconsin population who were born outside the U.S., while those born in Latin America represent 33.9 percent. The two largest groups in these categories are

Southeast Asians and Mexicans. The Hmong, Cambodians, and Laotians have very low level literacy rates because opportunities for education and reading were almost nonexistent in their home countries. Many recent Mexican and other Latin American immigrants have less than a high school education. The 2000 census indicates that 36,736 people over age 5 in Wisconsin speak an Asian or Pacific Island language at home and 168,778 people over age 5 speak Spanish, and they do not speak English well. Many people from other ethnic groups also live in Wisconsin. There are significant numbers of Ethiopians, Russian Jews (many of whom are seniors), and Bosnians who also have limited use of English, as well as smaller numbers of people who speak other languages. The National Institute for Literacy's National Adult Literacy Survey in 1992 revealed that 25 percent of adults in the United States who read at Level 1 or 2 were immigrants, just learning to speak English.

Literacy in the State Corrections System

The combined cycles of poverty and illiteracy are the root cause of many people ending up in Wisconsin's correctional facilities. Each county and large city has its own jail and juvenile detention facility, or they cooperate with others to house prisoners. The state of Wisconsin operates several state prisons, coordinates the housing of some prisoners out of state, and manages several secure juvenile facilities. The corrections organization also has oversight of the home detention program and probation services. There is one federal prison in Wisconsin, located in Oxford.

Wisconsin State Prison Inmate Profile for 2002

Total	22,000
Adults	20,650
Juveniles	1,350
Average age	35–36
Male	92%
Female	8%
Illiterate	30%
No high school diploma	50–60%
Low job skills	65–70%
Mental health problems	65%
Drug and alcohol abuse	65%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Corrections (www.wi-doc.com).

People in jail are there because they are waiting to post bail, are awaiting trial, or are serving a sentence that is typically under a year. Some prisoners may be in the Huber program, which allows them to leave jail to go to work and return in the evenings and weekends. County jails frequently move prisoners to avoid overcrowding. The counties cooperate with each other by holding prisoners when they have openings and later shifting their overload to another county.

Adults in prisons are serving court-ordered prison terms of more than one year. The prisons system includes home detention, minimum-security facilities that used to be called "work camps," medium-security facilities, maximum-security facilities, and the "super-max" prison in Boscobel, depending on the prisoner's age, health, and type of crime involved. Two mental health facilities house inmates who have significant mental health needs. There are currently several hundred prisoners housed out of state, most in privately run facilities. The adults are primarily from Wisconsin but include anyone who is tried and convicted of a crime in Wisconsin.

The inmates in the federal prison are from all over the country. These inmates have been tried and convicted of crimes that fall within federal jurisdiction. The prison body is in constant flux, with inmates arriving

and others leaving on a weekly basis. Sometimes they are being shifted to a location closer to a place where they will be tried. Sometimes they are shifted to even out the numbers of inmates in a different prison.

In an interview, Vibeke Lehmann, library services coordinator for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, indicated that approximately 22,000 offenders are incarcerated in Wisconsin's prison system: 20,650 adults and 1,350 juveniles. The average adult inmate is 35 or 36 years old. However, the fastest-growing segment of the prison population is seniors, a result of several factors: sentences are getting longer, there is less-frequent use of parole, and there is a higher percentage of inmates convicted of violent crime, with subsequently longer sentences.

Most adult prisoners are male—92 percent; 8 percent are female. Fifty percent of the inmates have not completed high school. About 30 percent are functionally illiterate, and about 65–70 percent do not have employable skills. Approximately 65 percent have mental health and emotional problems. And 65 percent had problems with drugs or alcohol before they were incarcerated. The juvenile demographics mirror those of the adult population. Juveniles placed in juvenile facilities must attend school.

A report by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics issued in April 2002 reveals that Wisconsin incarcerates African American offenders at a higher rate than any other state in the country. But Wisconsin's overall incarceration rate is below the national average. In mid-2001, there were 4,058 African American inmates in prison and jails in Wisconsin per 100,000 African American residents. Nationally, African Americans are incarcerated at 6 times the rate of European Americans, but the rate in Wisconsin is 10 times the rate for European Americans.

Juveniles under the age of 17 are in detention facilities within these jails for much the same reasons as adult inmates, although they are supposed to be housed away from adults and attend in-house school. The schooling varies greatly within these county jails. Education is not a requirement for 17-year-olds who are charged as adults.

Other juvenile inmates are housed at facilities that combine a corrections environment with a school. There are separate facilities for males and females. A small number of juveniles are assigned to other options, such as "boot camps."

According to the 2002 U.S. Bureau of Justice statistics report, Wisconsin leads the country in the number of inmates that are sent out of state. At the time of the study, 4,526 inmates were housed in other state or federal institutions. The number has since dropped to about 3,318 inmates.

Agencies Providing Literacy Instruction in Wisconsin

Three general types of literacy services are offered in Wisconsin: adult basic education (ABE), English as a second language (ESL), and family literacy. A variety of literacy agencies and programs provide these service. The three major organizations that address literacy issues in Wisconsin are the technical college system, local literacy councils, and community-based literacy agencies. Fourteen literacy service agencies were interviewed for this book.

Recent Public Library LSTA Projects That Serve Inmate Populations

In 2001 Appleton Public Library used LSTA funds to provide monthly book talks at a nonsecure juvenile facility for teens who need out-of-home care. The same year, Eastern Shores Library System used LSTA funding to put children's books in the inmate visiting rooms in two county jails. The funds also placed books at all the juvenile facilities located in the system. The Dane County Library Service was involved with a Motheread-Fatheread project in the Dane County Jail and also provided services to a minimum-security state prison.

In 2002 the Southwest Wisconsin Library System in Fennimore used LSTA funds to place children's books in the visiting room at the Prairie du Chien Correctional Facility. Wisconsin Valley Library Service in Wausau provided a core collection of materials at the Marathon County Juvenile Facility and also placed materials at a shelter for teens.

In some states, federal funding for literacy efforts goes directly to public libraries or includes libraries, but in Wisconsin, most federal literacy dollars go to organizations that provide work placements and to the technical colleges. The technical colleges offer classes taught by paid instructors. Many of the technical college students are working to complete their general equivalency diploma (GED) or high school equivalency diploma (HSED). Other students are taking general ABE or ESL classes. Some of these students may also have a volunteer tutor assigned to them by the local literacy council or community-based organization.

Literacy councils are typically organized in larger communities and receive funding through various sources, such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) to address the educational skills needed for employment. The larger councils usually have a paid director and staff who teach classes; they may also use volunteer tutors. The councils typically provide tutor training and may also offer the training to the tutors of other area community-based organizations.

Literacy community-based organizations (CBOs) are primarily volunteer staffed and have little funding outside of the money they raise themselves. The two major umbrella organizations for most CBOs were Laubach Literacy International and Literacy Volunteers of America. These two agencies are in the process of merging and will become an agency called Proliteracy Worldwide.

The literacy services offered by the CBOs, literacy councils, and some technical colleges may include services to county jails and state or federal prisons, as well as detention facilities for teens. They may have outreach services in specific areas around the state that have high populations of people who use English as a second language, such as migrant housing camps. Some have on-site classes for businesses that employ large numbers of non-English-speaking people, such as canning or meat-processing factories.

Early childhood programs such as Even Start and Head Start may provide adult literacy instruction, as do some private organizations and private schools. Many social service agencies that serve minority populations have literacy, basic English, and citizenship classes. Job placement services may pay for literacy services, but work is emphasized over education in Wisconsin's W2, the redesigned welfare program. Occasionally, public school districts offer adult literacy instruction. Some larger businesses offer literacy instruction as part of their overall employee education programs or target some employees for ESL instruction. Several universities offer English-language classes for faculty or for spouses of students. Even with all of these agencies providing services, it is not unusual for students to wait 3 to 12 months to be matched with a tutor, especially in urban areas.

The Role of Public Libraries

In many states, public libraries provide direct adult-literacy instruction. They may establish and coordinate local literacy councils. These libraries often have paid staff who teach or direct literacy instruction and activities. In some situations, the libraries receive federal funding targeted for literacy; in others, the libraries find their own funding. Literacy instruction in public libraries is not the norm in Wisconsin. In a small number of communities, local literacy councils or CBOs were established by the public library or are managed by library staff. Few Wisconsin libraries offer direct adult literacy instruction. When they do, it is usually a family-literacy project done in collaboration with a local literacy provider. In the past five years, some of these programs used LSTA funding to pay for family-literacy activities that were targeted at families who use English as their second language. Several literacy council offices are located in public libraries but operate independently.

Bosnian Family Literacy Project in Stoughton

When a significant number of Bosnians arrived in Stoughton as war refugees in 1999, the local literacy council and social service agencies provided adult literacy classes at the public library. In anticipation of the arrival of more refugees, the public library wrote an LSTA grant for funds to purchase materials in the Bosnians' native language, as well as English instructional materials. Staff worked with the public schools to provide after-school tutoring at the library.

Results of the Survey of Library Services to Adults with Special Needs

Special Needs Survey Questions on Literacy

Question	Number of Libraries Responding Yes	Percentage
• Had contact information about local literacy providers at the library.	154	53%
• Provided space regularly for tutors and literacy students or for tutor training.	151	52%
• Had an adult literacy or ESL collection.	134	46%
• Made either a tutor or student referral to a literacy provider.	134	46%
• Consulted with other libraries or systems about literacy issues.	119	41%
• Added materials in Spanish.	112	38%
• Publicized literacy issues at programs, in a newsletter, or in training sessions.	77	26%
• Allowed the library phone number to be used by local literacy council.	67	23%
• Created a service brochure describing literacy resources.	63	22%
• Added materials in a language other than English or Spanish.	61	21%
• Conducted a tour, orientation, or open house for adult or ESL students.	55	19%
• Included a periodical or newsletter for adults who do not read well.	53	18%
• Sent staff to training on assisting people who have ESL needs.	48	16%
• Was a member of the local literacy council or coalition.	48	16%
• Sent staff to training on adult literacy.	45	15%
• Library card application forms available in a language other than English.	39	13%
• Created a service brochure in a language other than English.	31	11%
• Included a periodical or newsletter in a language other than English.	29	10%
• Had a Web page with links to literacy providers.	26	9%
• Included literacy providers in a planning process.	23	8%
• Included providers of ESL instruction in a planning process.	20	7%
• Had a Web page with links to ESL resources.	20	7%
• Translated program flyers into a language other than English.	10	3%
• Translated meeting notices into a language other than English.	3	1%

Note: In 2002, 293 of Wisconsin's 380 public libraries completed the survey, a 77 percent response rate. See chapter 12 for the complete survey and a summary of the results.

Barriers to Service

Literacy agency interviews indicated that some of the barriers that keep people from using libraries include a lack of access to reliable transportation to get to a public library, the library's location, availability of parking, and hours the library is open. General anxiety about government institutions can also stop some people from using a library, especially if they do not speak English. They may not be familiar with the concept of a public library, and they may fear filling out any government forms. People with low literacy skills may not have experience with libraries or computers, and knowing they will have to use a computer can discourage public library use.

English speakers may be embarrassed about their low reading skills and avoid libraries to prevent people from knowing they cannot read well. Because they do not read and are not library users, they may not know of the library's nonprint resources or the print materials that could help them learn to read. For some families already stressed by daily demands of just coping with life, adding a library return deadline to their already-complicated lives is impossible.

Fines and replacement costs of materials can prevent people living in poverty from using a library. Any alternative method to work off fines or earn back library privileges is often appreciated.

Not surprisingly, language is a huge barrier to public library use for people who do not speak English. Some people from cultures such as the Hmong are non–print oriented and do not know that libraries contain items besides books. Many adults who do not speak English well fear that they will not be able to ask for help, that they will not be able to understand the questions the librarians ask, and that the library will not have any materials in their language.

Planning and Collaboration

A general consensus among the agencies consulted was that it is difficult to involve people with low-level literacy skills in public library planning. They are typically not library users and may not have the self-confidence to participate in a formal planning process, or may not have an understanding of the concept of public libraries. This problem is compounded when the people do not speak English or come from cultures with no tradition of public access to free libraries. In these cases, the agencies could offer assistance. Some indicated that they would be willing to help their clients complete a survey for the library or gather a focus group. Librarians are encouraged to go where the students are and offer to serve on the boards of the local literacy providers. Agencies may also be able to recommend a successful adult student who could give some insights into the long struggle of learning to read as an adult. Social services agencies for immigrants and United Migrant Opportunity Service staff were suggested as possible contact agencies to assist in planning for the needs of adults who do not speak English.

Because most public libraries do not offer direct literacy instruction, it is critical that they become part of the literacy network. One suggestion was for the development of a statewide partnership between libraries and literacy providers. Literacy providers point out that tutors often bring their students to the library and help them get a library card, which the students might not do on their own. Without collaboration, it is difficult to get adults to come to the library. When families who use English as their second language are involved, working with agencies can be a good way to get the parents to begin visiting and using a public library. The following agencies could be involved:

- Refugee service agencies
- United Migrant Opportunity Service (UMOS)
- Asian PTO associations
- Schools

Staff Training

Staff training in literacy should include general literacy issues and tips on how to interact with people who may not be able to read well, who are members of a minority group, or who use English as a second language. Because some people who have disabilities also have low literacy skills, it is important that staff be comfortable assisting people with disabilities. Staff can routinely offer assistance to people who have difficulty completing forms. If people seem hesitant to write even after they have been told what information needs to be on the line, staff can ask them if they would like the librarian to write the information for them. This is done routinely in many grocery stores for people who cannot write out checks.

Librarians should not hand someone who cannot speak English well a form to complete in English, direct them to an online catalog, or give them directions in English. Instead, try using a charadelike approach to assess their needs and walk the person to the area they need. A smile is the same in every language. Respect for other cultures should be reflected in every transaction with the public and be a core value for all staff.

Librarians can invite local literacy providers to do an in-service for their staff and trustees. Staff people are likely to benefit from attending annual literacy conferences, training sessions offered at state or national conferences, or training offered through the regional library system. It is often helpful if the staff are trained to identify basic reading levels so that they can recommend books adult new readers can read to their children. Courses on emergent literacy and beginning readers offered by the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC), often using distant education technologies, can be extremely helpful for both adult and youth services staff. Local reading specialists can also be asked to provide some training in this area.

Two Wisconsin Libraries Use the Prime Time Family Literacy Program

The Vaughn Public Library in Ashland and the Appleton Public Library used LSTA funds and humanities grants to begin Prime Time Family Literacy programs at their libraries. Prime Time is a reading discussion and storytelling series founded by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities and offered in partnership with the American Library Association. Prime Time is designed to help families with literacy needs bond around the act of reading and learning together. It teaches parents and children to read and discuss humanities topics, aids them in selecting books, helps them become active library users, and improves critical-thinking skills.

Prime Time involves extensive collaboration between a library and numerous other agencies. The schools or literacy councils help identify potential families for participation. Hmong translators were recruited through social service agencies. "Scholars" from either the university or local school district were involved, as was a storyteller.

Appleton is the only Prime Time program in the country that is targeting Hmong families who use English as a second language. Both libraries report tremendous success with this collaborative family literacy project.

In 2003 five other libraries will join Appleton and Ashland in providing Prime Time Family Literacy projects, using LSTA funds.

In 2002, when Wisconsin Literacy, Inc., the umbrella organization for literacy councils, initiated its "900 Tutors in 90 Days" recruitment campaign, the DLTCL sent the information and recruitment bookmarks to all the regional systems. Libraries were asked to assist with this statewide initiative by placing the bookmarks with materials their patrons checked out.

Libraries can include literacy providers in planning when sponsoring a reading event, especially for children, such as National Library Week, a Dr. Seuss Day, or the start of a summer reading program. They can invite literacy groups to meet at the library occasionally or host an open house for groups to celebrate literacy events at the library.

Collections and Services

The agency interviews identified specific types of materials and services needed to support literacy efforts. Libraries should have a good collection of adult literacy materials in print, video, and audio formats, as well as software programs for adult students. Having the materials in-house, rather than having access to them on a shared catalog system, is important. Adults who cannot read well are not likely to understand how to search an electronic catalog or find what they want and place a hold on it, and they are unlikely to ask for assistance. The problem is compounded when the person does not speak or read English. It is also difficult to leave messages or to explain to non-English speakers that the library has the materials they requested.

A good collection of non-English and bilingual adult literacy materials, especially in Spanish, is needed in some libraries, as dictated by the local population demographics. Libraries should make this decision based on the demographics and not wait for the people to become library users before investing in materials of interest to them. People who do not speak English may very much appreciate reading materials in their own language, listening to music from their homeland culture, and watching videos in their own language. These types of materials are not typically carried by the traditional library supply sources. But they are often readily available in local grocery stores that specialize in ethnic foods. Asian and Mexican grocery stores, especially, often carry a wide variety of videos and music on CD and cassette, and the store staff can often offer selection recommendations.

Informé

Lakeshores Library System used LSTA funding to subscribe to Informé, an on-line database of 50 magazines and newspapers in Spanish. Member libraries were then able to use this resource at the local level.

It is helpful if the materials in other languages are housed together in one area, if possible. Adults who are learning to read often are motivated by their desire to read to their children. It is important that they be able to find children's books they can read. The CCBC has excellent bibliographies on trade books with interesting story lines that are easy to read. Many adults who do not speak English can read in their own language, but their children are likely to read only in English if they are attending American schools. Bilingual picture books are helpful for these families because the adults can read in their native language and the children can read in English. Materials of this type are readily available in English and Spanish but harder to find in other languages.

Adult picture dictionaries are often bilingual and come in many different languages. Materials intended for middle school or high school students with learning disabilities labeled "hi-low" (high interest, low vocabulary) may be of interest to adults. Literacy providers recommended that libraries own bibliographies that would help adults identify these materials. Many literacy providers use simple poetry with adults, so collections of short poems are appropriate for the adult literacy area. Links to literacy Web sites should be included on the library's Web page.

Adult learners appreciate recorded books, especially if a print copy is available. Abridged recordings of classic books are often popular. Some publishers pair a recorded book with a large-print copy, which is especially useful for adults who have learning disabilities or vision impairments. Libraries also need instructional materials for tutors to help them plan lessons and find appropriate materials for their students. Bilingual staff and reference services, recorded messages in languages other than English, and answering machines that will be answered by bilingual staff can be extremely helpful for non-English-speaking patrons.

Electronic Translators and Translator Pens

The South Madison Branch Library is located in a neighborhood rich in cultural diversity. It is an entry point for many people coming to Madison, especially those who speak languages other than English. With the help of the regional library system, the library purchased electronic translators for circulation. These small calculator-type devices translate words from English into other languages, or from one language into English. Some have a feature that speaks the word aloud in either language. The text-reading feature is useful for people who cannot read well and who may need a word pronounced so they can recognize it in print, or for people wanting to know the correct pronunciation of a word in English. Some of these translation devices include several languages. They are very popular with people who are trying to learn to speak English. They are also used by people who speak English but who are trying to learn a foreign language. English-speaking travelers may take them on their trips to other countries. This is another example of an adaptation intended for use by a group that has a special need but that benefits the larger community as well.

A related device is a penlike tool that is run over a word or short group of words in one language, which is then translated into English, or from English to another language. The South Central Library System assisted with the purchase of these devices, using family-literacy grant funds, as an experiment to determine the practicality of circulating such tools in a public library setting. The South Madison Branch reports that both English-speaking and non-English-speaking patrons are excited about the devices and that they are circulating well.

Students need books, videos, and software to help them study for their GEDs and HSEDs. It is important that the library have only materials relating to the new national GED test released in 2001 because there are significant differences in the tests and how students should prepare for them. Several literacy agency professionals have urged public libraries to remove old test preparation materials because using an approach in math that is not used on the test, for example, can seriously affect a student's test score.

Other suggestions included obtaining materials in these areas:

- American history books that parents with low reading levels could study with their children, as well as parenting materials written at low levels.
- Citizenship study materials in English and other languages.
- Financial literacy information.

Because some people with disabilities may have low literacy skills, adaptive media such as closed-caption videos for people with hearing impairments are very useful. These items may also be useful for people who do not have hearing loss but who may have learning disabilities or who are learning English. Users can follow along by reading text as well as getting visual clues from the videos. Additional suggestions for adaptive equipment are included in chapters that address specific disabilities.

Services, as well as materials, should address literacy needs in a public library. Suggestions include the following:

- Tutor bibliographies.
- Bibliographies for adults studying for their GED.
- Bibliographies in languages other than English that promote the library's resources in these areas. Information on the library's hours, a phone number for a bilingual staff person, and a number where a message can be left to be answered in the person's native language are all helpful.
- Story hours and family programs in languages other than English.
- Basic computer skills classes, taught in languages other than English.

- Informational signs and forms translated into other languages.
- Book discussion groups for beginning readers.
- Adult book clubs that offer encouragement or rewards of interest to adults for reading, much as they do for children or for family reading programs.

One suggestion was for librarians to meet or greet people at the door, welcome them to the library, and offer assistance immediately to avoid having people wander around looking for the right person or desk to ask for assistance. Interviewees stressed that all patrons should have a good experience at the library in terms of customer service. Some literacy providers like to bring their classes to the library for instruction on library organization, shelf location, and on-line catalog use. This is an excellent opportunity to extend a friendly welcome and demonstrate good customer service techniques.

Literacy providers noted that an important niche for public libraries is family literacy. The library has both the materials and the programs that may entice parents to come to the library with their children, read with them, and assure their children have access to reading materials. They felt that schools, day care providers, Head Start, and Even Start are important partnering agencies for public libraries in this initiative to break the cycle of illiteracy.

Accessible Buildings and Services

Recorded Message in Spanish

The Mead Public Library in Sheboygan recorded a message in Spanish that repeated the basic library information and invited people to leave a message in Spanish to be answered by their bilingual aide. The aide worked with other staff to answer reference questions. This was part of an LSTA-funded project.

Issues of building accessibility are important to consider because some of the people who have literacy needs also have disabilities. This accessibility includes the building, bathrooms, meeting rooms, and workstations. Adaptive technologies such as a screen reader and enlarger, which were originally designed for people with vision impairments, can be very useful to people with learning disabilities and for people trying to learn to speak and read English. Users can follow along with the spoken text and improve their comprehension and pronunciation skills. Having a TTY at the library is essential for people who have hearing impairments and who also have low literacy skills to call to or from the library. Additional suggestions on accommodations are included in other chapters that address particular disabilities.

Marketing

Libraries must give attention to in-house marketing of materials for adult new readers. Make the materials easy to find—it is often helpful if they are in one area. There should be good signage, but, as one interviewee suggested, use wording such as "Adult Information" or "Find What You Need Here," rather than "Adult Literacy Materials." Placement is important. If the collection can be placed near other collections or displays of information of general interest to adults, people who cannot read well will feel more comfortable going to this area to find materials they can read, rather than if they have to go to an area that readily identifies them as having literacy needs.

Help People Find ESL Materials Easily

One library hung a string of international flags over the area with materials in other languages to help visually identify what was in the collection.

Two important considerations in marketing to people who have literacy needs are to "cross-market" and "target" services. It is useful if libraries and literacy agencies get on each other's mailing lists. Public libraries need to help advertise the needs and activities of the literacy agencies, and the literacy agencies need to help promote library activities and services with their clients. Most literacy agencies have a newsletter and may be willing to carry information about library services and activities.

It seems obvious, but library marketing must take into account that the targeted audience is not print oriented. If print materials are used, the typeface should be large and the text extremely simple. Video, overhead, or Power Point presentations that are very visual may be more appropriate than print handouts for presentations.

There are only limited materials that are of specific interest and use to adults who do not read or speak English well. Therefore it is important to use target-marketing techniques. Librarian should not expect their general services brochures or presentations to be specific enough to encourage people with low literacy skills to use their services. Brochures written with very simple vocabulary and grammatical structure are needed. Librarians can create specific materials and presentations that give these patrons a reason to come to the library. Literacy providers noted that outreach efforts, such as a librarian going to a location to meet people who have literacy needs, may be more effective than inviting them to events at the library. Librarians can send information to, or ask to visit, classes at technical colleges or at literacy councils.

If the targeted audience does not speak English, all print materials should be appropriately translated. Word of mouth is the best way to market services to non-English speakers. But that can work against a library if the staff is not trained to make an effort to welcome and assist people who do not speak English when they do visit the library. Libraries should be familiar with alternative radio and television stations that serve specific populations such as the Hmong and Hispanic. There are Web sites that post information for local ethnic groups in some communities, and libraries should consider using them.

Churches with services for non-English-speaking families, social service agencies, laundromats, and specialized grocery stores are all good places to post information for people who do not speak English. Food pantries, homeless shelters, free-meal sites, free clinics, Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) sites, and thrift stores may also be good places to post library information for both the ESL population and for people living in poverty. Libraries can send information to social service agencies serving these populations. Additional agencies that might work with the library include Head Start, Even Start, Hmong associations, and other social service agencies serving immigrants and people living in poverty.

Libraries can celebrate ethnic holidays and host programs at the library for the general public that will help educate the community about a particular group or culture. Food, music, and dance programs are often universally appreciated and appeal to all ages.

A Librarian Successfully Targets a Hispanic Migrant Housing Camp

The librarian at the Jane Morgan Memorial Library in Cambria, a community of under 700 people in central Wisconsin, noticed in the late 1980s that although the population of the community doubled each spring with the arrival of several hundred Hispanic migrant workers and their families, she rarely saw them in town. These workers had been coming to the area for many years but were an almost-invisible population. They were housed in trailer homes on the edge of town that were owned by the canning companies that employed the workers. The children were bussed to and from summer school classes but never came into town at other times. The librarian would occasionally see some of the families at the grocery store, post office, or rummage sales but rarely in the parks, churches, restaurants, or the library.

With a succession of grants—LSTA and others—the library targeted services for this population. It started by moving the performers for the summer library program to a park near the school and rescheduling them for noon. This allowed the children from migrant families to attend with the town children and eat their lunches during the program. The school brought the children to the library to get cards and check out books. The librarian made weekly visits to the housing camp and did programming on the lawn for the children.

The first year, the children used the library, but none of the adults came. The second year, children proudly showed that they had kept their library cards during their moves to Texas and back to Wisconsin. Grandparents began to come to the library. The most popular items were videos—many families brought video players to the camp with them. The third year, when librarian, Jeanne Radke, arranged for ESL classes to be taught at the library, adult workers started to use the library.

For many years, the librarian continued the weekly programs on the lawn of the housing camp. She encouraged community leaders to join her in reaching out to the migrant workers' families. There was a gradual change in the whole community.

A little over a decade later, Hispanic migrant families are seen everywhere in town. They come frequently to the library. The community parade now features an entry of the Hispanic workers and their families, dancing to their own music in traditional costumes, proud of their heritage. There are two menus at the community festivals. One in English offers hot dogs and hamburgers; the other is in Spanish and offers tacos and fajitas. The women in the kitchen work side by side, communicating with each other even though they do not speak the same language. An invisible population has become accepted and valued for more than just their hard work in the local factory; they became an acknowledged and welcomed part of the community. The community recognizes the role the library played as being a catalyst for this change in the community.

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Additional Resources

National General Adult Literacy Organizations

American Library Association. <www.ala.org>; 800-545-2433 or 888-814-7692; 312-944-7298 (TTY); 50 E. Huron, Chicago, IL 60611.
Adult Literacy @ Your Library. <www.ala.org/literacy/links.html>.
Leading the Way for Literacy. <www.ala.org/pio/factsheets/alaleading.html>.
Literacy in Libraries across America. <www.ala.org/literacy/about.html>.
Office for Literacy and Outreach Services. <www.ala.org/olos>.
Roads to Learning—The Public Libraries' Learning Disabilities Initiative. <www.ala.org/roads/>. The basics of learning disabilities are explained at this site, which is maintained by the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies.
Services to New and Non-Readers. <www.ala.org/olos/resources/nonreaders.html>.
21st Century Literacy @ Your Library. <www.ala.org/work/literacybrochure.html>. This brochure gives an overview of literacy and the need for public libraries to be involved in addressing the problems.
Dave's ESL Café. <www.eslcafe.com>; Fax: 818-713-9113; 22287 Mulholland Highway #381, Calabasas, CA 91302-5157. The Internet's meeting place for ESL and EFL students and teachers from around the world.
Laubach Literacy International (LLI). <www.literacyvolunteers.org>. See Proliteracy Worldwide.
Literacy Volunteers of American (LVA). <www.literacyvolunteers.org>. See Proliteracy Worldwide.
National Institute for Literacy (NIFL). <www.nifl.gov>; 202-233-2025; 1775 I Street NW, Suite 730, Washington, DC 20006-2401. A federal government organization leading a national effort toward full literacy in the United States, providing high-quality regional, state, and national literacy services.
Orton-Gillingham. <www.orton-gillingham.com>; 800-646-9788 or 248-646-2872; Institute for Multi-Sensory Education, 1000 S. Old Woodward, Suite 105, Birmingham, MI 48009. A national company that uses a revised Orton-Gillingham multisensory method of language instruction.
ProLiteracy Worldwide. <www.proliteracy.org>; 800-448-8878 or 315-422-912; 1320 Jamesville Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13210. A merger of Laubach Literacy International and Literacy Volunteers of America created this new organization.
Steck-Vaughn. <www.gedpractice.com>; 800-531-5015; 10801 N. Mopac Expressway, Building #3 Austin, TX 7875. A major publisher of adult literacy materials, this site allows adult students to try test questions for the GED tests.

National Family Literacy Organizations

American Library Association. <www.ala.org>; 800-545-2433 or 888-814-7692; 312-944-7298 (TTY); 50 E. Huron, Chicago, IL 60611.
Fact Sheet: Family Literacy-Helping Parents Help Their Children. <www.ala.org/pio/factsheets/familyliteracy.htm>.

Prime Time Family Reading Time. <www.ala.org/publicprograms/primetime>. ALA's site on the Prime Time reading and discussion series for families.

Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy. <www.barbarabushfoundation.com>; 202-955-6183; 1201 Fifteenth Street NW, Suite 420, Washington, DC 20005. This foundation supports family literacy projects to break the cycle of illiteracy.

Family Literacy: Directions in Research and Implications for Practice, Office of Library Program, U.S. Department of Education. <www.ed.gov/pubs/FamLit/>; 555 New Jersey Avenue NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC. Papers from a symposium on family literacy that took place in January 1996.

National Center for Family Literacy. <www.famlit.org>; 502-584-1133; 325 W. Main Street, Suite 300, Louisville, KY 40202-4237. An organization supporting family literacy services throughout the United States with training, research and advocacy.

National English as a Second Language Organizations

National Center for ESL Literacy Education. <www.cal.org/ncle>; 202-362-0700, ext. 200; 4646 Fortieth Street NW, Washington, DC 20016-1859. Provides resources on ESL and maintains a listserv for tutors and students.

REFORMA (National Association to Promote Library Services to the Spanish-Speaking and Latinos, an affiliate of the American Library Association). <www.reforma.org>; P.O. Box 832, Anaheim, CA 92815-0832. List of Wisconsin libraries with items in Spanish on their Web sites is at <www.reforma.org/spanishwebsites.htm#WI>.

Wisconsin Organizations

Adult Education/Literacy Office. <www.board.tec.wi.us/Grants/aefl/AEFL.htm>; 608-266-1770; Wisconsin Technical College System Board, 310 Price Place, P.O. Box 7874, Madison, WI 53707-7874. Provides coordinating services to the programs within the Technical College System that provide literacy services.

Key Newspaper. <www.keynews.org>; 414-297-6794; 700 W. State Street, FH6, Milwaukee, WI 53233-1443. A service of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* and Milwaukee Area Technical College, it is a newspaper that includes current events written at low reading levels.

LDA of Wisconsin–Learning Disabilities Association of America. Joan Sanicola, copresident, 1446 Baytree Lane, Neenah, WI 54956.

Literacy Services of Wisconsin, Inc. <www.literacyservices.org>; 414-344-5878; 724 W. Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI 53208. This agency provides services to 160,000 functionally illiterate adults who live in the Milwaukee area.

Wisconsin Department of Corrections. <www.wi-doc.com>; 608-240-5000; 3099 E. Washington Avenue, P.O. Box 7925, Madison, WI 53707-7925.

Office of Correctional Education. 608-240-5142. Provides coordination for the literacy services within the Wisconsin correctional institutions.

Wisconsin Department of Industry, Labor, and Human Relations. <www.dwd.state.wi.us/wc/>; 608-266-1340; P.O. Box 7891, Madison, WI 53707-7891.

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. <www.dwd.state.wi.us>; 608-266-3131; 201 E. Washington Avenue, P.O. Box 7846, Madison, WI 53707-7946.

Governor's Work-Based Learning Board. <www.dwd.state.wi.us/gwblb/>.

Human Resource Investment Council. <www.dwd.state.wi.us/dwdwia/wia/WIA%20State%20Council.htm>.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. <www.dpi.state.wi.us>; 800-441-4563: 125 S. Webster Street, P.O. Box 7841, Madison, WI 53707-7841.

Family Literacy. <www.board.tec.wi.us/wlrn/evenstar.htm>; 608-267-9141; Family Literacy consultant.

GED State Office. <www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsis/let/gedhsed.html>; 608-266-1723; GED consultant.

Public Library Literacy Programs. <www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlcl/pld/special.html>; 608-267-5077. Special Needs consultant.

Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. <www.dwd.state.wi.us/dvr/>; Central Office: 608-243-5600; 888-877-5939 (TTY); 2917 International Lane, Suite 300, P.O. Box 7852, Madison, WI 53707-7852. Oversees numerous programs related to employees and employers involved in helping people with special needs find and keep employment.

Wisconsin Technical College System Board. <www.board.tec.wi.us>; 608-266-1207; 608-267-2483 (TTY); P.O. Box 7874, 310 Price Place, Madison, WI 53707-7874.

Adult Basic Education. <www.board.tec.wi.us/wlrn/>; 608-267-9684.

Wisconsin Family Literacy Initiative. <www.wifamilyliteracy.org>; 877-534-4978 or 608-266-1207; 608-267-2483 (TTY). Tries to unify, improve the quality of, and expand family literacy services in Wisconsin. It is coordinated by the Wisconsin Technical College System Board.

Wisconsin Literacy Resource Network (WLRN). <www.board.tec.wi.us/wlrn/>; 608-266-3497. Provides information to literacy service deliverers throughout the state. Coordinated through the Wisconsin Technical College System Board.

All Web sites listed in this section were accessed in November 2002.

Getting Started with Little Money and Time: Literacy

The following are some ideas for public libraries to use when designing literacy services.

Breaking Down Barriers

- Greet every person who comes into the library with a smile, especially if they seem to be speaking a language other than English.

Planning and Collaboration

- Ask someone in the community to translate the signs on the library door such as hours, the card application forms, and basic library brochures into a language other than English.
- Draft a short article or make a list of the materials the library currently has that might be useful to adult new readers or adults who are learning to speak English. Then call or stop in and introduce yourself to the major literacy providers in your community. Find out if they have a newsletter, and ask if they will print your article or list in their next edition. Ask if there is anything they would like included in the next edition of the library's newsletter.
- Collect free information brochures from social service and health agencies that are translated into other languages and put them out at the library.
- Make a bibliography of the adult literacy materials and ask the local technical college alternative education departments or other local literacy providers to distribute it for you. Be sure to include materials that may be housed in different parts of the library, such as with videos, recorded books, or juvenile collections of hi-low materials.
- Make a bibliography of materials of interest to a population that uses English as its second language. Ask someone in the community to translate the bibliography as a volunteer project. If it is in Spanish, the middle school or high school Spanish teacher may be willing to do this for the library. Ask local literacy agencies, social services groups, or churches serving this population to distribute copies for the library.

Staff Training

- Send at least one staff person to the next literacy training session sponsored by the library system or state literacy conference.

Collections and Services

- Weed the collection of all GED materials with copyrights prior to 2001, when the newest national test was released. This is a situation where wrong or dated information is harmful and "no information is better than bad information." Throw away the dated materials, even if the library cannot afford at this time to replace them.

Accessible Buildings and Services

- If the library has materials in a language other than English, gather them on one shelf or area and put up reproductions or small flags of the countries that use that language to give patrons a visual reference.
- Look carefully at the library's basic services brochure. Try identifying words that could be simplified, and rewrite the brochure using a very basic sentence structure for adults who cannot read well.

Marketing

- Plan to put up a display and identify materials to use to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month in September or the Mexican celebration of Cinco De Mayo on May 5, Hmong New Year (the date fluctu-

ates but usually falls between Thanksgiving and January—any agency that serves the Hmong community can identify the date for the local celebration), or any other important festival for a non-English-speaking population in your community. Celebrate International Literacy Day (www.reading.org) in September and Family Literacy Day (www.famlit.org) in November.

All Web pages listed here were accessed in November 2002.